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DICK & FITZGERALD, Publishers, 18 Ann Street, N. Y.

WON BY A KODAK

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

Arranged for the American Stage

BY HAROLD SANDER

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FITZGERALD PUBLISHING CORPORATION
SUCCESSOR TO
DICK & FITZGERALD
18 Vesey Street New York City

WON BY A KODAK

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CHARACTERS.

ADAM STERN.....A middle-aged bachelor
JAMES WITTY.....A young architect
CORA GREENFIELD.....Niece of Adam Stern
ELIZABETH PIERCE.....A veiled lady
JESSIE.....Housemaid at Stern's
TIME.—The present. TIME OF PLAYING.—Fifty minutes.

COSTUMES AND CHARACTERISTICS.

ADAM STERN is an irascible bachelor of about 40, the guardian as well as the uncle of Cora Greenfield. Wears house costume.

JAMES WITTY is a bright, likely young fellow of about 25. His disguise should be perfect enough to deceive the audience. A slight stoop and a foreign accent would greatly add thereto. For dress, a long frock coat and a rusty silk hat would be advisable, also a pair of spectacles.

CORA GREENFIELD is a sweet, bright girl of about 20, dressed in a light blouse, smart tie, belt, and dark skirt.

ELIZABETH PIERCE, the "veiled lady," must be smartly and attractively dressed.

JESSIE, the housemaid, is a nicely-spoken, superior girl, not pert or saucy in manner, but deferential and sympathetic, such a girl as would naturally have her young mistress' confidence and trust. Maid's costume.

INCIDENTAL PROPERTIES.

Sewing for CORA. A bundle of dark curtains, and a tray with coffee cup and plate of biscuits for JESSIE. A kodak, long-haired wig and whiskers for JAMES WITTY.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

As seen by a performer on the stage facing the audience. R. means right hand; L., left hand; c., center of stage; D.R., door at right; D.L., door at left. UP means toward back of stage; DOWN, toward footlights.

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SEP -8 1917

\$0.15

no. 1.

WON BY A KODAK

SCENE.—*Nicely furnished sitting-room, such as well-to-do people would possess. Work-basket on small table, books, papers, etc., about room to give it a natural, much-used look. Doors at R. and L. DISCOVERED CORA seated at small table busy with sewing, which takes her full attention. After a pause a knock is heard at D.L.*

CORA (*looking up from her work*). Come in.

ENTER JESSIE, D.L., *looking mysterious*.

JESSIE (*half whispering*). Please, Miss Cora, Mr. Witty is at the door and would like to see you.

CORA (*rising, work in hand*). Where is my uncle, Jessie?

JESSIE. Gone out, Miss.

CORA. Are you sure?

JESSIE. Quite, Miss Cora. I saw him go.

CORA. Then show Mr. Witty in here, and, Jessie, keep a look-out—you know.

JESSIE. Oh, yes, Miss, you can depend on me.

CORA. Thank you, Jessie. You are a good girl, and I won't forget you. (EXIT JESSIE, D.L., *smiling*. CORA *lays down work on basket, straightens herself, pats her hair, and looks pleasantly expectant*) It's just horrid

having to see Jim in this hole-and-corner fashion. Uncle is too unreasonable for words.

ENTER, D.L., JIM WITTY. *He crosses impetuously to CORA and greets her in a lover-like manner.*

JIM. Cora!

CORA. Jim!

JIM. It's good to see you, little girl!

CORA. And it's good to see you, Jim, but it's awfully risky; your coming here, I mean.

JIM. Well, Cora, I felt desperate to-day, and I've come to see if you have managed to find out what your uncle has against me. If you have, tell me everything; it is important that I know. Oh, by the way, I must tell you I saw him leave the house before I ventured to knock. I hate this sneaking work, but "needs must," you know. Eh, Cora?

CORA (*smiling*). I suppose so, Jim; but sit down just for a little while. Jessie is on the look-out. (*They sit at each side of table*)

JIM. Jessie's a brick, and we will remember her later on, when we set up our own home.

CORA (*ruefully*). I don't see any likelihood of that happening, Jim; at least, not until uncle ceases to be my guardian and I am quite at liberty to please myself.

JIM. Ah, that brings me back to where I started. What's my stumbling-block to Mr. Stern's good graces? I don't want your money, I can keep you comfortably without that. So what is it? I must know!

CORA. Well, Jim, we had some hot words only this morning, and he said such mean things about you——

JIM (*grimly*). Go on, let's hear them.

CORA. I don't like to repeat them.

JIM. But, Cora, darling, you must, or how can I know?

CORA (*hesitatingly*). Well, he says you're a milksop—a nincompoop—that you couldn't catch a tame rabbit tripping. You haven't as much inventive genius as a

penny Jack-in-the-box. In short, you are more like a nursery governess than a man, and with his good-will you will never marry me or handle any of my money. There, Jim, you asked me to tell you, and I have done, at least, as much as I care to remember, for he rated me for nearly an hour.

JIM (*laughing*). My goodness! What a category! Anyhow, it's a comfort to think that that's not your opinion of me.

CORA (*reproachfully*). Jim!

JIM. It's a wonder he didn't have a shot at my dramatic efforts while he was on the job. My amateur efforts, I should say.

CORA. He did. Said you couldn't act for nuts, and couldn't disguise yourself enough to deceive a hen. Oh, I don't know what he didn't say.

JIM. Well, he is an old curmudgeon, anyhow! (*Laughing again*) So that's how I strike him, is it? Well, we shall see what we shall see. Meantime, he has the "whip hand," unfortunately for us. (*Quick knock off D.L. is heard*)

ENTER JESSIE, D.L., *looking scared*.

JESSIE. Oh, please, Miss Cora, the master.

CORA (*springing up*). Where, Jessie?

JIM (*rising also*). Not in the house yet, is he?

JESSIE. No, sir. Coming down the road.

CORA. Oh, Jim, you must not let him see you here!

JIM. For your sake, no; for myself I don't care.

JESSIE. Miss Cora, if Mr. Witty went down the back garden, he could get away while I let the master in.

CORA. The very thing! Jim, quick, through this door—(*Pointing to D.R.*)—down a few steps which lead into the garden, through the little gate at the bottom, and into the back lane. Jessie, get to the front door and keep uncle there a minute if necessary. (*EXIT JESSIE, D.L.*) Quick, quick, Jim—go!

JIM. All right, dear, I'm off. Good-bye! I'll manage

that you shall hear from me soon. (*Kisses her heartily and hurries off, D.R.*)

CORA. Oh, what a narrow escape! (*Smooths her hair and takes up her work, and is barely seated when door opens and JESSIE RE-ENTERS, D.L.*)

JESSIE (*looking around cautiously*). Has Mr. Witty gone, Miss Cora?

CORA. Yes, just. Where is Mr. Stern?

JESSIE. Gone to his room, Miss. He was very cross because I kept him waiting a little before I answered the door. I did it on purpose, Miss.

CORA. Yes, Jessie, I understand. I don't know how I should have escaped a terrible scene but for you. I am sorry to make you deceitful to your master, but—(*Tearfully*)—I have no other friend that could help me like you can. (*Wipes her eyes with handkerchief*)

JESSIE. Miss Cora, don't take on; it will all come right, you'll see. And Mr. Witty is a good gentleman, I'm sure, and if I may be so bold as to say it, Miss, will make you a good husband some day. And, besides, if Mr. Stern is my master, you are my mistress, and my first duty is to you. I always believe in a maid sticking up for her mistress, because, nine times out of ten, the master's to blame.

CORA (*half smiling*). Jessie, you're a real treasure, and I don't know how to reward you.

JESSIE. Don't you, Miss? Well, I'll tell you, shall I?

CORA. Certainly.

JESSIE. Keep me as long as you are here, and when you go take me with you.

CORA. That I will, Jessie! And I shall be the gainer by the transaction. You shall stay with me till some "good" man wants you.

JESSIE. Oh, Miss, never mind the "man." I'm not bothering about that, at least not yet. I'm happy enough with you, and you deserve all the good turns I can do you for your goodness to me.

CORA (*with a start*). Jessie, here's Mr. Stern. You had better go and prepare his lunch tray.

JESSIE. Yes, Miss.

[EXIT D.L.]

ENTER, D.L., ADAM STERN. *He looks sharply at CORA, who is evidently intent upon her sewing, then picks up a newspaper and sits down on chair opposite.*

ADAM (*after a few seconds' silence*). Sulking, eh?

CORA (*looking up*). No, uncle, not sulking.

ADAM. What then?

CORA. Merely quiet, that's all.

ADAM. Humph! Thinking about that Jinny-hammer, I suppose.

CORA (*starting up*). Uncle, you said quite enough about Mr. Witty before you went out. I won't listen to any more.

ADAM (*flinging paper down*). Houghty-toighty, Miss, so that's the way you speak to your lawful guardian, is it? All because I won't let you marry the first young Jack-a-napes you take a fancy to. Sit down, I tell you!

CORA (*looks defiant, then irresolute, and finally sits down slowly and bursts into tears*). Uncle, how can you be so cruel? I wish I had no horrid money, and no—no—

ADAM. No wicked uncle, eh? Now look here, Cora—dry your eyes, for I don't like to see you cry.

CORA. How can I help crying when you are so unjust.

ADAM. Oh, I'm "unjust," am I, because I exert my authority for your good?

CORA. It's not for "my good," as you call it.

ADAM (*quickly*). What is it for, then?

CORA (*drying her eyes and looking straight at him*). I can't quite make out. Jim bears a good character with every one but you. He is in a good position, and can keep me.

ADAM. Bah! (*Picks up newspaper again*)

CORA (*continuing, with spirit*). I love him and he loves me. Uncle, were you never in love?

ADAM. What do you ask me such an idiotic question as that for?

CORA. Because I am sure, if you had been, you would not have quite forgotten what it was like. (*Sighs and looks pensive*)

ADAM (*behind his newspaper*). Oh wouldn't I?

CORA. I have often wondered why you have never married.

ADAM (*gruffly*). Oh have you?

CORA (*musingly*). Would nobody have you?

ADAM (*starting up*). What!

CORA. Gracious uncle! How you made me jump. I didn't mean to vex you, I'm sure.

ADAM (*sitting down again*). Well, well never mind. Look here, Cora, I've not opened my mouth to anyone before about this, and—and—I don't think I will now—no, I won't! (*Turns away slightly*)

CORA (*looking interested*). Oh, uncle, do! I would like to know, and I won't mention it again.

ADAM. Well, go on with your sewing; there's very little to tell. (*CORA picks up her work and keeps her eyes bent on it*) When I was a young fellow, I did like a girl above ordinary, and I was fool enough to think she liked me. Well, she jilted me and made me the laughing-stock of my friends. D'ye hear—(*Fiercely*)—the *laughing-stock!* I never could bear to be laughed at in my life. That's my weakness, I suppose. (*He looks at his paper again*)

CORA. Well, uncle?

ADAM. Well, that's all! How much more d'ye want?

CORA. Did she marry somebody else?

ADAM. I suppose so. I don't care if she did. I never gave another woman the chance to laugh at me. I hate the idea of love and marriage, and all such unbelievable rot. Bah!

CORA (*softly*). Oh, I see.

ADAM. "See?" What d'ye see?

CORA. Nothing much, uncle.

ADAM. Oh! Well, the next person that takes a rise out of Adam Stern will deserve all he gets out of the job.

CORA. Poor uncle! (*Aside*) I understand better now.

ADAM. Poor nothing! Pity the other fellow, not me. Where's my luncheon?

CORA. I think I hear Jessie coming with it now.

ENTER JESSIE, D.L., bearing small tray containing cup of coffee and plate of biscuits, which she places on table near MR. STERN. She tries to attract CORA'S attention, but fails, and is caught by MR. STERN as she tries a second time.

ADAM (*to JESSIE*). What's the matter with you, girl? Got St. Vitus' dance, or what?

JESSIE. Oh, no, sir, but, please, sir, there's a man at the door—a man with a kodak.

ADAM. Well, what does he want?

JESSIE. He wishes to know, please, if you would like the house photographed. He says he has everything ready, and he could take it in a minute if you are willing. (*Tries again to attract CORA'S attention, and fails*)

CORA. Oh, how nice, uncle! Do! We have never had a picture of the house, and the garden is looking so nice just now.

ADAM (*drinking his coffee*). Humph! Very well. (*To JESSIE*) Where is he, did you say?

JESSIE. At the door, sir.

ADAM. I'll go and speak to him. (*Aside*) I'd better not refuse Cora everything. [EXIT D.L.]

JESSIE. Oh, Miss Cora! Miss Cora!

CORA. Whatever is the matter, Jessie?

JESSIE (*laughing, and then looking scared*). Oh, Miss Cora, the man with the kodak.

CORA (*bewildered*). The man with the kodak. What of him?

JESSIE (*coming close to CORA to whisper*). Oh, Miss Cora, it's Mr. Witty.

CORA. What! (*Springing up and seizing hold of JESSIE*)

JESSIE. It's Mr. Witty, for sure, Miss, and he asked me to tell you not to be surprised at *anything*. I saw a lady with him at the gate.

CORA. A lady! (*Releasing JESSIE*) Oh!

JESSIE. Yes, Miss, talking and laughing with him; but she seemed *elderly*-like.

CORA. Oh! What else did he say? Quick, Jessie!

JESSIE. I had not time to stop, Miss. I was late with master's luncheon as it was, and I thought I heard him coming, so I had to hurry away.

CORA (*looking frightened*). Whatever can this mean?

JESSIE. I don't know, Miss. Hush, they're coming!
(*Gathers up tray and dishes and EXITS D.L.*)

ENTER, D.L., ADAM STERN, *followed by JIM WITTY, who wears a long-haired wig and bushy whiskers and carries a kodak. He removes his hat as he enters and gives a sweeping bow to CORA, who acknowledges it timidly, keeping her eyes bent on the floor.*

ADAM (*quite good-humoredly*). There, that's soon over. I beg pardon, sir, my niece, Miss Greenfield. (*Waves his hand to CORA*) There, Cora, you can have your portrait of the house with your uncle standing at the door. You see, I'm not so unkind after all.

CORA. Oh, please, uncle! (*With a quick look at the man with the kodak, who remains standing*)

ADAM. All right! Oh, I say, Cora, where is Jessie? Call her, and get her to bring some dark curtains or something to drape the windows in that little ante-room there. (*Pointing to door at right*) Mr.—what is your name, sir?

JIM. Bluff, sir; Bluff. (*Bowing*)

ADAM. Mr. Bluff says if we can make him a dark room, where there is a cold-water tap, he can develop the negative sufficiently to show us if it will do. You had better clear the things a bit, and I'll call Jessie. (*Goes to D.L. and calls "JESSIE" as he EXITS.*)

CORA (*with a gasp*). Jim! Whatever——

JIM (*raising hi. hand warningly and speaking hurriedly*). Hush! Not a word, dear. My Aunt Elizabeth will be here shortly. She knows everything. Quick, go into that room; your uncle is coming. Leave all to me.
[EXIT CORA, D.L.]

ENTER JESSIE, D.L., *with an armful of curtains, followed by MR. STERN.*

ADAM. Now, Jessie, you go in there—(*Pointing to R.*)—and help Miss Cora to darken the windows. (EXIT JESSIE, D.R. *To JIM*) Now Mr.—Mr.—

JIM (*bowing*). Bluff, sir; Bluff.

ADAM. It's rather a curious name. I don't remember hearing it before.

JIM. No, sir? (*Aside*) It's my belief you won't want to hear it again, either.

RE-ENTER CORA, D.R., *followed by JESSIE.*

CORA. I think we have made the room dark enough for anything now.

ADAM. Come along, Mr. Bluff, and we'll have a look. I have some matches in my pocket. [EXIT D.R.]

JIM (*with a back-look at CORA and JESSIE*). Very good, sir. I am sorry to put you to so much trouble.

[EXIT *after* ADAM, D.R.]

CORA. Oh, Jessie, how will all this end? I'm ail in a tremble, I feel so afraid.

JESSIE. If I were you, Miss, I'd leave it to——

RE-ENTER MR. STERN. EXIT JESSIE, D.L., *hurriedly.*

ADAM. Now we shall soon see what our little place looks like. I'll give Whiskerandos a good order if they turn out to be decent pictures. I'll have one enlarged and take it down to my club. It will look well on the wall there. "Adam Stern and his——"

ENTER JESSIE, D.L.

JESSIE. Please, sir, a lady to see you.

ADAM. A lady to see me?

CORA. What name, Jessie?

JESSIE. Please, Miss, I—I didn't ask her.

ADAM (*angrily*). Then why didn't you? I don't expect any lady. Are you sure she asked for me?

JESSIE. Yes, sir. She asked for Mr. Adam Stern. She's sitting in the hall, sir.

CORA. You had better see her, uncle, hadn't you?

ADAM. Show the lady up, Jessie, and don't be so stupid again. (EXIT JESSIE, D.L.) I do declare, there's no peace and quietness anywhere. It's enough to make a parson swear; for two pins I'd—

RE-ENTER JESSIE, D.L., *ushering ELIZABETH PIERCE, smartly dressed and thickly veiled.*

JESSIE. The lady to see you, sir. [EXIT JESSIE, D.L.

CORA (*offering chair*). Will you be seated? (ELIZABETH *bows and takes seat offered, but does not raise her veil*)

ADAM (*turning to lady*). You wish to see me, madam?

ELIZABETH. Yes, I do. (*Glances at CORA meaningly*)

CORA (*rising*). Perhaps your business is with my uncle alone?

ELIZABETH. Thank you, yes.

CORA. That being the case, I will not apologise for leaving the room.

ELIZABETH. Thank you, it will not be necessary.

[EXIT CORA, D.L., *bowing.*

ADAM (*aside*). What the Dickens does this mean? (*Aloud*) Now, madam, I shall be glad to learn your business with me. (ELIZABETH *rises and moves towards ADAM in a mysterious fashion. As she approaches he retreats. This goes on until she gets quite close to him, and then she flings her arms round his neck*)

ELIZABETH. Adam, Adam, at last we meet. (D.R.)

opens and JIM steps out, as MR. STERN, too much astonished at first to resist, is in the embrace of ELIZABETH)

JIM. A thousand pardons! I am sorry that I appear at so delicate a moment. I will again retire.

[EXIT and closes D.R. with exaggerated politeness.

ADAM (after the first astonishment, struggling to get free). Madam! Woman! Who are you? What are you? Leave go my neck, will you? (ELIZABETH still clings to him and hides her face on his shoulder) Oh, you shameless hussy! Help! help! Cora, Cora, I say! Help! (D.R. opens again and JIM appears)

JIM. You cry for help, sir. Can I help you?

ELIZABETH (to ADAM, to whom she is still clinging). How cruel you are to me after all your promises. (To JIM) Retire, sir, we do not desire your presence.

JIM. A thousand pardons, madam. (Bows and EXITS D.R.)

ADAM (in exasperated alarm). Are you mad? Cora! Cora! where are you?

ENTER CORA, D.L., rushing in at her uncle's last cry.

CORA (stands looking in astonishment as her uncle finally frees himself and sinks panting into a chair). Uncle, uncle, whatever is the matter? (ELIZABETH EXITS, D.L., very slowly, unobserved by others)

ADAM (angrily). How do I know "what's the matter?" A pretty state of things, letting mad women without names into a man's house, and then asking, "What's the matter?" As for you, madam! (He turns to the place where he has flung ELIZABETH, who has meanwhile stolen from the room while he is speaking) Great Scott! She's gone! Am I mad, dreaming, or what?

CORA (a look of comprehension coming into her face). How can I tell, uncle? I come in here and find a strange lady with her arms round your neck. You, uncle, who profess to hate "love-making" and all such "unbelievable rot."

ADAM (*starting up in a passion*). Do you—do you dare to suppose that—that I know that abominable, outrageous, black-veiled female? That—that I was making love to her?

CORA (*speaking in a judicial tone*). Well, uncle, what can I suppose? At least, you must own that she was making love to you.

ADAM (*excitedly*). I'll make love to her if I catch her at it again. (*Shakes his fist wrathfully*)

CORA (*pretending to be shocked*). Oh, uncle!

ADAM. Don't stand there "Oh, uncle-ing" me. Go and see if that creature has left the premises! Search every nook and corner! (*Raising his voice*) Go, I say!

CORA. Uncle, don't shout so loudly. You know the man with the kodak is in there. (*Aside, smiling*) Poor uncle!

[EXIT D.L.]

ADAM (*rubbing his hands through his hair and pacing floor*). Who in the world is that wretched woman? How can I ever convince Cora that I don't know her? I declare, the little minx is putting airs on about it already. I wouldn't for the world have a thing like that leak out. I should never face the club again, and that bewhiskered fellow in there to come out when he did. How can I explain to him? I'll call him out while Cora is away. (*Goes to D.R. and calls*) Mr. Puff, Bluff, or whatever is your name can you come out and speak to me?

ENTER JIM, D.R., *bowing and rubbing his hands.*

JIM. You wish to speak to me, sir?

ADAM (*irritably*). Haven't I just said so?

JIM. A thousand pardons. I am all attention.

ADAM. You must have been surprised at what you saw just now, eh?

JIM. Not at all, sir, not at all.

ADAM (*in a loud, wrathful voice*). What?

JIM. Well, perhaps the lady was a trifle demonstra-

tive; but then—(*Shrugs his shoulders*)—perhaps the lady is very fond of you.

ADAM. “Demonstrative!” Why, she nearly strangled me, and I don’t even know her.

JIM (*with a sly smile, and poking ADAM in the ribs playfully*). She knows you, at all events. It was unfortunate I happened to enter when I did. I beg again a thousand pardons.

ADAM. Confound your “thousand pardons.” I’m sick of hearing you repeat that, and if you dare to poke my ribs again, and look at me like that, I’ll smash both you and your kodak. You—you——

JIM. Softly, softly, sir; it is for me now to speak. You think me so foolish as to believe you, or to be afraid of your threats? You shall pay for threatening to smash me and my kodak. Oh, but, yes, you shall pay, sir.

ADAM (*turning to look at him*). What do you mean?

JIM. I mean that others will be equally slow to believe when the story is told to them.

ADAM. Others?

JIM. It will be a good joke at a certain exclusive club when they know that the confirmed bachelor and woman-hater has at last “changed his spots.”

ADAM. What? Would you dare to spread a story like that?

JIM. Men who are bullied and threatened dare much. Besides, I happen to know——

ADAM. “Know?” What do you know? You—— (*Turns aside to control himself*)

JIM. I know that Adam Stern will listen to me while I make terms.

ADAM. “Terms?” Then you have a price for your silence? I guessed as much.

JIM. Yes, sir, I have a price. You have “guessed” rightly, and my price is high.

ADAM. Suppose I refuse? Suppose I say, “Take yourself and your kodak out of this?”

JIM. You will not refuse.

ADAM. Will not?

JIM. You will not refuse to listen to my terms, because——

ADAM. Because?

JIM. I happen to know that Adam Stern fears being held up to ridicule more than he fears anything. (*Bows*)

ADAM. Confound your bowing and scraping. Name your price, and let me see the back of you while you are safe and I have some self-control left.

JIM. The price, sir, is the hand in marriage of your niece, Miss Cora Greenfield!

ADAM (*starting back*). What! You—marry my niece! You be-whiskered lump of shabby mystery. You——

JIM. Softly, sir, softly. It's my price!

ADAM. Why, you don't even know her.

JIM. I have known her long enough to love her. How long I have known her is my business.

ADAM. I cannot entertain such a proposition.

JIM. No! Then there is no more to be said. (*Turns away as if to get his things*)

ADAM. Stop, stop! I will give you any money you like to name; but I cannot ask my niece to even look at you in that light.

JIM. And why?

ADAM. Because—because—— (*He seems struck with a happy thought*) She is already engaged! (*Aside, triumphantly*) That will settle him.

JIM (*thoughtfully*). Ah! If that is true it *might* make a difference. Surely then, sir, under such circumstances I may ask the name of the happy man. Come, that's only fair, sir!

ADAM (*pausing, and then speaking desperately*). Mr. James Witty, a very desirable young man with whom my niece is deeply in love. Now, are you satisfied?

JIM. Sir, pardon me if I seem to doubt still; but if you will let your niece tell me with her own lips in your presence what you have just told me, I will leave the house at once, or when you bid me go.

ADAM (*looking relieved, rings bell*). ENTER, D.L., JESSIE) Look for Miss Cora and tell her I want her instantly.

JESSIE. Yes, sir. [EXIT D.L.]

JIM. Please excuse me if I go in this room one instant. [EXIT D.R.]

ENTER CORA, D.L.

CORA. You sent for me, uncle?

ADAM (*in a hasty whisper*). Don't ask questions; agree to what I say. Don't look stupid.

RE-ENTER JIM, D.R.

ADAM (*continuing*). Cora, you may think it strange, but I want you to tell this gentleman that you are engaged to Mr. James Witty. He wishes to know.

CORA (*aside*). Am I, uncle?

ADAM (*aside*). Say you are.

CORA. But *am* I?

ADAM. Yes, then!

CORA (*to JIM*). Yes—I—am—yes.

JIM (*to ADAM*). With your consent, sir?

ADAM (*angrily*). Of course, with my consent. She couldn't be engaged without it.

JIM (*bowing*). Then there is no more to be said except to—(*Pulls off wig and whiskers*)—ask your blessing, sir.

ADAM. Jim Witty! by all that's wonderful! (CORA goes UP stage, as if afraid)

JIM. Yes, Mr. Stern, Jim Witty, very much at your service. Jim Witty, the "nincompoop," the "milksop," who has no "inventive genius," who couldn't "catch a tame rabbit tripping," who "couldn't act for nuts," who "couldn't disguise himself enough to deceive a hen," and a few other things "too numerous to mention." (*Laughs*)

ADAM (*slowly and sternly*). How do you know I said these things? I didn't say them to you!

JIM. I begged Cora to tell me exactly what you had against me. That is how I know. Nay, I forced her to repeat your words.

ADAM. And has Cora put you up to this?

JIM (*hotly*). No, sir, she has not. I wanted to show you that I was not such a milksop as you thought me, that I had some "inventive genius," that I could "act" a little, and that I could disguise myself enough to deceive even you. Ah, Mr. Stern, be generous. I love Cora dearly, and (*Smiling*)—now that you have consented to our engagement I will wait, if it is your wish, until she is of age, and you may keep her money for me.

ADAM (*holding out his hand*). You've cornered me, you young rascal. (JIM *shakes his hand heartily*) Well, I am glad you are not quite the fool I took you to be. (*To CORA, who is still UP stage*) Come here, Miss, while I box your ears well. You richly deserve it.

CORA (*flinging her arms round his neck*). Oh, you dear, dear uncle!

ADAM (*removing her arms slowly, as if remembering*). Stop! That reminds me! (*To JIM*) Who was that woman? Was she part of your "inventive genius?"

JIM. She was, Mr. Stern. You see, I was hard driven to secure Cora. Will you sit down and I will tell you all about it? (JIM and ADAM *sit at each side of the table. CORA stands close by her uncle, leaning on the arm of his chair*) When I got home to my diggings last night, I found my aunt there. She had come over to see me. She is my mother's youngest sister, and I am rather a favorite of hers. She saw I was troubled about something, so I confided in her. She advised me strongly to learn what your objections really were, and she also gave me a little information which set my wits to work. So after Cora told me what you had said, I rushed straight home, got my kodak, which I amuse myself with occasionally, and pretended to be a photographer to get into the house, put on one of my dramatic disguises, and hurried back here. You know the rest,

sir, except that I only pretended to use my kodak.

ADAM. Yes, I do know the rest—*nearly* “the rest.” Where is that woman? Your aunt, I mean. Am I safe from her? Answer me that! (*Rises*)

JIM. Yes, Mr. Stern; I don’t think even I could persuade her to play that part again.

ADAM. And what was the “information” she gave you? Come, out with it!

JIM (*looking confused*). She said you feared ridicule more than anything else on earth.

ADAM (*turning sharply to JIM*). Ah! How did she know that?

JIM. She would not say. She only said she knew you when you were quite a young man.

ADAM. What was her name then?

JIM. Elizabeth Pierce.

ADAM (*aside*). I thought I had heard that voice before. (*To JIM*) What is her name now?

JIM. Elizabeth Pierce still. She is unmarried, and lives with a lady friend. I have heard that owing to some misunderstanding in her youth, with some one she was very fond of, she never cared to marry.

ADAM. Where is she now?

JIM. She has gone to my rooms, and from there she is going to catch her train, so—(*Smiling*)—you need not fear further *attention* from her.

ADAM (*looks irresolute for a moment, then jerks out abruptly*). What time is the train, and where is she going to?

JIM. The 2.30 express to Preston, but, really—I—I don’t know—

ADAM. That’s just it. You don’t know! (*Goes to D.L. and then turns round to speak*) You children have beaten me, and, after all, I don’t think I’m sorry. Now, wish *me* luck on *my* errand. I’ll be back by-and-bye.

[EXIT D.L.]

CORA (*springing up excitedly and seizing hold of JIM*). Oh, Jim! I believe I guess!

JIM. Guess what?

CORA. That your aunt is the heroine of the story uncle told me this morning. Oh, how lovely! (*Rushes to bell and rings it*) I must let Jessie know how we have prospered!

ENTER JESSIE, D.L., *looking cautiously about.*

JESSIE. Yes, Miss?

CORA. Oh, Jessie, all's come right! Hasn't it, Jim?

JESSIE (*clapping her hands delightedly*). I am so glad!

JIM (*putting his arm round CORA, and holding a hand out to JESSIE, which she takes*). Yes, Jessie, all has ended well, thanks to your assistance in the little plot of "Won by a Kodak."

CURTAIN.

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